Theodemer

(d. 421/428)

BRIEFING

Theudomer, sometimes also spelled Theodemer, was a Frankish king, probably of the Ripuarian Franks, at the beginning of the 5th century. In 421 or 428, the Romans had him and his mother killed by the sword.

SOURCES

The only reliable source on Theudomer's life is Gregory of Tours , who reports that the consular tables state that Richimer was Roman consul for one year and that his son Theudomer was executed along with his mother Ascyla . Whether this father is identical with the Roman Master of Soldiers (magister militum) usually identified as Richomer, who was consul in 384, is uncertain, but possible. While it may seem surprising that a man who was present at the Roman imperial court could later rise to become Frankish king, Mallobaudes appears to have followed a similar path 30 years earlier.

Pierre Riché suggests that Theudomer supported the usurpers Constantine III and Jovinus and that he was therefore later condemned to death by Emperor Flavius Honorius. However, it is unclear why the emperor waited more than ten years until then. Some historians also suggest that Theudomer was Chlodio 's father. Around 580, Gregory of Tours reports that Chlodio succeeded Theudomer, although Gregory himself was unsure of the extent of their relationship. It even remains unclear in this statement whether Chlodio succeeded directly or whether another duke ruled in the interim. Around 660, Fredegar specifies in his chronicle that Theudomer was Chlodio's father, but it is questionable whether Fredegar had more precise information than Gregory or merely reinterpreted Gregory's account.